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is unseen? I answer that whatever spiritual powers they may be indued with, which are beyond our comprehension, that they should possess such influence on matter, as is implied in the preceding objection, is merely hypothetical, and contrary to probability, as it is to experience† - It is improbable, that spiritual & created beings, not united to corporeal organs, should possess any power over matter - It is improbable that any beings, except by an immediate command from God should be permitted to operate out of their own sphere, and still more improbable that evil beings, should be permitted to usurp the sphere appropriated to human nature by a wise & beneficent Creator in the order of the universe - It is contrary to experience - We see no such prodigies ever effected - The marvellous tales, the offspring of imposture and of ignorant wonder, with which every country has abounded in the earliest periods of its society, are discredited in proportion as the science of nature, is cultivated & improved - The argument

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Note † From our ignorance of the system of nature, there will always be infinite chances against one, that every hypothesis is false

from experience, which is false when applied to the miracles which are appealed to as the test of divine revelation is decisive against all demoniacal miraculous operations. According to the true idea of divine miracles they can rarely be interposed in the course of human events, and only when God sees it necessary to make a new annunciation of his will to the world - This is a case of so high & peculiar a nature that our experience of the usual train of events, in the physical world cannot be considered as an infallible measure of the credibility of those extraordinary acts of Omnipotence, by which it may please God to authenticate the mission of those holy men whom he hath employed to promulgate the law of his grace to mankind - But if we admit demoniacal miracles it must be from an essential power, which those evil spirits are supposed to possess over the objects of Nature - If it were no greater than that possessed by men, must we not frequently perceive a thousand prodigies performed by them which could not be explained by the ordinary laws of nature? If it essential to them as spirits, would they not be as free in its exercise as wicked men; If it were not essential would God impart it only on particular occasions, and that merely for the purpose of deceiving Mankind? If such a power exists it must be as common and general in its operations, as are the powers of human nature or any of the ordinary laws of the Universe - Here then experience must be and

infallible criterion of judging. If we have no experience therefore of prodigies in nature, which must necessarily be ascribed to the agency of superior spirits either good or evil. It is contrary to sound philosophy to believe in their existence. To say he restrains them in the employment of these powers, which are supposed to be natural to them, when he does not restrain man in the natural use of his faculties (I repeat it) is mere hypothesis ——

~ As reason & experience plainly contradict the idea of any miraculous powers existing in evil Demons, the Scriptures which are often appealed to for the support of this absurd belief, furnish no foundation for the credit of Demoniacal miracles. It is impossible they should indeed without destroying their own evidence. Let us consult the explicit declarations of the sacred writers themselves, upon this subject and then pass under our review, some of those facts which are supposed to give the greatest countenance to the belief of demoniacal powers — The deities of the Pagan nations were of two kinds. The former were what they called the natural Gods, and were only the different parts of nature, as the Sun, the Moon, the Planets, which they imagined were eternal & animated with a divine power. The latter were denominated Demons, and were only the souls of heads, the founders, the benefactors, and sometimes the destroyers of nations which after death were exalted to a middle rank between

men and the Great Gods ∴. Cicero, Plutarch, Pliny & many others of the Greek & Roman writers, acknowledge that the immediate objects of the worship of their respective countries were chiefly dignified men whose names being given to the superior Gods, and their terrestrial and fabulous history, blended with the symbolical theogony of their natural & celestial divinities, has created an infinite and almost inextricable confusion in their mythology — Both these classes of Gods, then Moses & the Prophets most expressly & repeatedly denounce altogether impotent, and those who pretended to act by any influence over the regular course of nature — derived from them as im=

Note ∴ The word Demon among us bears a very different signification from that which Daimon conveyed to the mind of a Greek. But the christian fathers having taken up the idea, that all the objects of Pagan worship, were wicked & infernal spirits, who had certain powers given them of ranging through the Earth, of injuring & deceiving mankind — The term has in their hands entirely changed the meaning - if we bear in mind the true interpretation of the term, daimones, which the translators of the new testament, have every where rendered Devils, we shall rescue from mistake & abuse, many passages in that sacred book, which in their present form, seem greatly to extend the power of malicious and in= fernal spirits, over the order of nature & the happiness of men, contrary to experience, to reason and all our ideas of divine goodness: knowing that the scriptures deny any power to the souls of dead men, or even of Phusikoi Deoi of the Heathens, which were only certain portions of inanimate Nature, supposed by them to be inhabited by celestial spirits, we must adopt such an interpretation of the texts to which I have referred as will corespond to the known ideas of the sacred writers — End of the Note

Deuteronomy 32. 21

postors. The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, & all the elements of nature, the wise Legislator of Israel, regards merely as the works of God and instruments in his hands, to accomplish the purposes of his Providence; but denies them life, intelligence or any supernatural Power. The belief of the divine power & agency of the spirits of dead men, which were the demons, or inferior deities of the Heathens, and paying them any venera-tion or worship, or having recourse to them for any kind of aid, council, or protection, he condemns as being among the greatest impieties & crimes.

Magicians, Necromancers, Astrologers, Soothsayers, & all the tribe, who pretend to supernatural operations & extraordinary communications with the spiritual world, existed then as they still do, & supported themselves upon the ignorance & credulity of mankind. But Moses expressed the same opinion of their powers, which is still entertained by the wisest christians that they consist only in craft, juggling & imposture.

He ✣ and after him the Prophets, call them all vanities. All the Gods of the nations are Idols or as it is in the original, nothing. The Prophet Isaih in order to demonstrate their impotence, their want of prophetic prescience, and their total destitution of all the attributes of divinity, challenges them & all who pretended to exhibit prodigies in their name, to produce any proof either of their foresight or their power. Declare to us saith he, things to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods, yea, do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed, that is that we may have just grounds to fear & venerate you, if you have the

powers of Gods, but behold ye are nothing & your work of nought. And the prophet Jeremiah, says, be not afraid of them, for they can do no evil, neither also is it in them to do good. The sacred writers do not acknowledge any miraculous powers in the Gods of Paganism, much less, in their priests, their worshippers & those criminal magicians, the pests of any society in which they exist, who used and pretended incantations in their name. The translators of the bible being themselves tinctured with the belief of Diabolical powers over the elements of nature, & a diabolical agency in human affairs, have so undered the original in several passages as to favour these ideas contrary to the original import of the termes. Thus Moses is made to say in that prophetic hymn, which he composed just before his death, and in which he foretells & condemns the people of Israel to Idolatry. They sacrificed unto Devils whom they knew, new Gods that came newly up whom they knew not and their fathers feared not. And the author of the CVI Psalm employing the same term, says, yea, they sacrificed their Sons & Daughters unto Devils. Now if all the Gods of the Heathens, were really infernal spirits, enshrined in visible forms, why should Moses call them new Gods. They were new only as the figures of the Idols, of Canaan & Palestine & the rites employed in their service were different from those of Egypt. The original term is Schedim wh signifies destroyers, expressing the cruel and unrelenting ascribed by the Phenicians to some of their idols. X. From this same prepossession in our translators

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X. The idols of Canaan were of a more sanguinary & cruel character than those of Egypt. especially Moloch. to whom human sacrifices were slaughtered, and the most dreadful of all sacrifices children offered by their Parents —

we find a term of very different signification in another passage rendered Devils ⁂. Moses prohibiting the superstitions of Egypt, just after the people of Israel had left that idolatrous country, says, they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto Devils. The original term is Scirim or Scheerim which signifies hairy beings; which characterises the animal worship of Egypt — The one of these terms depicts them, the horrible idols which the gloomy imagination of Palestine had created; the other those base and detestable objects of worship which swarmed on the banks of the Nile: neither of them implies infernal spirits, or any beings who possess supernatural power over their worshippers, or over the regular course & order of Providence — The great Legislators of the Jews therefore, so far from ascribing any miraculous power, to the magicians, or Gods of Egypt or any of the nations of Paganism, regards them merely as dead men, who have no real influence or controul over human affairs *

Neither Moses or any other writers of the old testament acknowledges acknowledges any supernatural power in any of the Gods, the pretended prophets, workers of wonders, or interpreters of portents in the heathen world — We learn with sufficient evidence from these writings, that they regarded these men, as impostors & the Deities whom they worshipped as nothing —

Notes

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* It is on this ground that the Psalmist calls the offerings made in the Heathen Temples, the sacrifices of the Dead. Psalm 106. 28. explained by numbers 25. 12. 3 & Israel in offering their first fruits as an oblation of thankfulness to God, was obliged to declare in order to free themselves from idolatry, I have not given aught thereof for the dead Deut. 26. 14th. In which passage it has been conjectured by several very eminent writers that moses has a particular reference to the worship of Isis —

They claim for Jehovah, the living & true God. exclusively of all prophetic inspiration, and all power of working miracles. It cannot therefore be reasonably supposed that Moses & the Prophets would put their predictions and miracles, by which they attested their divine mission, on a footing with sooth-sayers, magicians & other impostors of that kind, whose sole object it seems to have been, to amuse astonish or delude mankind, or that they should acknowledge any reality in them, or any comparison between them, & the works of the Creator & the Universe —

Having made these preliminary observations & settled the true idea, which the sacred writers entertained of magic & necromancy, of oracle and augury, & all those illusive arts; we are prepared to examine some of those extraordinary operations, recorded in the sacred history of the old Testament, which have been confounded with miracles & which have been supposed to be represented as real miracles, by the inspired writers themselves — Of these, the first of which I shall take notice, are the prodigies exhibited by the Magicians of Egypt —

— End of the 8 Lecture —

Lecture 9th

The history of the competition of the magecians of Egypt with Moses & Aaron, furnishes some of those facts which have been most relied on, by the advocates of Demoniacle miracle

These illustrious leaders of Israel were sent by the express command of God, into the presence of Pharoah a haughty and obdurate king, who held their brethren in a state of abject slavery.

This people were heirs of the promise made to Abraham, and the time was now arrived, at which God had destined to make them a great nation, the depositary of his holy law, of the Knowledg of his unity and infinite perfection, of the purity of his worship, of the promises and the hopes of his future Messiah. For this end it became necessary to obtain their freedom from a Prince, whose pride & whose interest, both opposed their emancipation. Such an act of justice to a people, who had been so long iniquitously enslaved, was not to be expected from a monarch of his character, without producing the most undeniable demonstrations, that in demanding their liberty, their representative & head was acting under the immediate authority of Heaven. He came to Pharoah therefore commissioned & empowered, to perform such prodigies in his presence and in the presence of all Egypt, as should carry with them

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to an impartial and disinterested mind, irresistible evidence of the divine spirit with which he was inspired. The unrighteous king willing to smother his own convictions, and to justify to himself his refusal of this high act of justice to an injured people, endeavoured to persuade himself that the miracle of Moses, though so grand & magnificent, & so far surpassing the powers of human art, were to be placed only on the same footing, with those sleights of Legerdemain & Juggling, those pretended incantations & powers of magic, with which the Egyptians were already so familiar. —

For this purpose he sent for his magicians, his sorcerers and enchanters, a class of deceivers with which all the Eastern nations of antiquity abounded. which are still to be found in most countries in proportion to their ignorance of true religion & of natural science, and with these he confronted Moses, in hope of finding such a resemblance in their works, as would justify him in refusing to acknowledge the sovereign & sole dominion of Jehovah, the God of Israel, over Egypt as well as over all the kingdoms of the earth. A few of the prodigies of the servants of God they dexterously imitated. the rest were above their skill. It is said in our translation, they did so with their enchantments, and seemed to turn their several rods into serpents, to convert water into blood and to bring up frogs out of the river; but having advanced thus

far their act could proceed no farther - The belief in witchcraft incantation, and the influence of evil & malignant spirits, over the minds of men, and the course of nature, was every where prevalent in Europe as well as in Asia, at the period of the translation of Scriptures into the english language, which has given a certain tinge on some subjects, to the phraseology of a work, otherwise so admirable for the age in which it was executed -

The same belief exists among a large portion of Society, to this day; and it is not easy for the wisest and best of men, entirely to divest themselves of the bias, which is naturally given to the mind by the influence of public opinion. To these cause causes perhaps we must ascribe it, that many pious & learned christian writers have conceded, that in this conflict with Moses, the magicians of Egypt performed real miracles, thereby giving great advantage to the enemies of the Gospel, and weakening the principal direct evidence of the truth of Christianity - For if we admit miraculous operations to be performed by any other being, however exalted his nature, or his powers, besides God, I repeat it, we take away from the mass of mankind, and I may say from mankind universally, every certain criterion to distinguish genuine revelation from imposture - But let us examine the facts of

the Egyptian miracles more clearly*. We know nothing concerning it but what is related by the sacred historian & legislator of Israel himself. It is necessary therefore in giving a meaning to particular phrases in his narration, to interpret them in consistency with his known and avowed principles, declared in other parts of his writings. And have we not seen in the preceding lecture, that wherever he speaks of the Heathen deities, he regards them as vanities & lies, - as the ideal works of a gross & superstitious imagination, as the inanimate productions of the hands of human artists, or as dead men who could neither hear, or assist their votaries. Every where they are represented as being equally senseless and impotent. Every where their sorcerers, their enchanters, their soothsayers, are represented as being merely professors of deceitful arts, without any real power, or any certain foresight of future events.

Keeping these ideas in mind, can it be supposed that Moses ascribes to the magicians or sorcerers of Pharoah, any real power of working miracles; or indeed any other power than that we see practised in every age by those who have cultivated certain secret arts of deceiving the sight? This is conformable also to the meaning of the original term translated enchantments, which primarily signifies covered arts, or what we mean by juggling

* See the book of Exodus Chap. 7 — 12.

and <u>legerdemain</u>. The term enchantment has been so long employed by men in common, to signify some spiritual and supernatural influence, altogether independent on the laws of matter & motion, that it immediately suggests the idea of Demoniacal agency. But when interpreted by the true import of the original, and by the innumerable declarations of the sacred writers on this subject, who deny such demoniacle influence, this idea will be found to be only the creation of habit & prejudice. —No such power ever did exist, as that to which the term enchantment is vulgarly affixed. —Another and no less unfounded misapprehension, has arisen from the preceding phrase, <u>they did so</u> with their enchantments, as if the magicians performed the very same works, which were performed by the Prophet of God himself. It is easily to be perceived, even from our own translation, that this cannot be the import of the phrase; for though an apparent success accompanied their three first attempts, yet at the fourth notwithstanding the same phrase is employed, they utterly failed, <u>and the magicians</u> it is said, <u>did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice</u> but could not ** Hence appears with sufficient evidence the meaning which ought to be given to the original

** Exodus—8—13

And the magicians set to wak with their enchantments or their secret arts. By working probably with an apparatus properly prepared, for imposing on the sight, as all Jugglers in all ages have done, they effected in the presence of Pharaoh, an imitation of a few of the miracles exhibited by Moses. That they should not be able to imitate the thunder, the lightning, the tempest of hail, the darkness of pestilence, w^h the dreadful minister of God, spread over the land of Egypt, is not surprising to those, who ascribe all power of changing the powers of nature, exclusively, to him who originally established them -

But there seems to be no reason in the nature of the thing, why those who appeared to produce frogs, and to turn water into blood, should not be able to operate the same deception on the sight in the case of the lice - The river filled with one of those kind of creatures, afforded agents in abundance for such Jugglers to wak with. And all the dust of Egypt one would imagine, would have afforded them an equal facility in their operation on the second kind. Those writers who believe in the reality of magical or demoniacal miracles, are pleased to say, that God here restrained the power of the Devil - But where is any such restriction made, either directly or by implication, in the sacred history? It is a mere hypothesis made in support of a theory which is as unscriptural as it is unphilosophical - It is more probable that this miracle turned on a subject, to which they were not accustomed to apply their

art; to which perhaps their art could not be easily applied, on account of the adhesion of that small animal to whatever it touches.

The sleights of legerdemain require agents on which to work, less adhesive to the hand of the Operator. Whatever justice there may be in this remark, their want of success in the present case, and in all the following prodigies which they attempted in imitation of the servant of the true God, clearly evinces to me, the absolute destitution of any power really miraculous inherent in them. All that they appear to have operated, according to the narration of Moses, and it is from that narration alone, that we have derived any information respecting them, does not surpass the feats of ordinary jugglers. At Naples certain monks pretend to convert water into blood, in honour of St Januarius, on a particular day of the year by dexterously substituting the one for the other. In Egypt there is a species of serpents, frequently trained to play harmlessly round the bodies of those persons, who have known how to educate them for that purpose, with which it was easy for men practised in the art, to perform a feat which depended only on dexterity of substitution ✻ But will not this representative impeach or bring into doubt, the miracles of Moses himself? No, all of them except the first were of such extent & grandeur, that it was impossible for any human skill or dexterity to accomplish them. They carried upon them the sublime and manifest tokens of an Almighty power. They pervaded the whole land of Egypt; they covered with distress & mourning an entire nation; they afflicted

✻ Shaws Travels pa. 429. Do. Supplement. p. 62

and tutified the Prince in his palace. The pride, the interests, the
passions of an absolute king, whose will had never before been contra=
dicted, all rose up to oppose the command of a God, whom he knew
not, conveyed to him by the representative of an enslaved people, whom
he despised. Yet was he humbled by the evidences of a divine power
which surrounded ~~Moses~~, and made repeatedly to sue to him as an inter=
cessor with Heaven, to deliver both the Prince and the nation from the
weight of the judgments which had fallen upon them. — There was an im=
mense ~~distance~~ difference then, between the miracles of Moses & the prodigies of the
magicians. The judgments inflicted by his word affected a great
Kingdom, throughout all its extent. The feats of his rivals were per=
formed in private in the presence of Pharaoh and his court. Here was
room for all the arts of Juggley & Legerdemain to be played off unde=
tected. That these feats were performed in private is not a mere
hypothesis, or an assertion hazarded without evidence. We might infer
it from the proud & insolent character of a despotic monarch, who only
wanted an excuse for denying the divine mission of the Hebrew Prophet,
and for refusing to emancipate a whole nation of valuable slaves, who con
tributed so much to his power and the splendor of his crown. But there
is another proof which is irresistible. The only two miracles of Moses which
the Egyptians imitated except the familiar one of exchanging the wands
for serpents, already occupied the whole extent of Egypt. It was therefore
impossible for theirs to appear on the same theatre at the same
time. In one case the entire face of the land was covered over the houses

of the Egyptians were filled with the vermin which crept forth from the waters at the command of Moses; in the other the river of Egypt and all its streams were converted into blood; so that to find but a small quantity of pure water, they were obliged to dig into the earth - The prodigies of the magicians were therefor circumscribed within a very narrow compass, and were exhibited probably in some small place, cleared for the purpose, near the river, where the king used to walk or near the place where he was accustomed to bathe*

This was sufficient for a prince who only wished to deceive himself, and to stifle in his mind the apprehensions excited by the astonishing power of the Legislator of Israel - Ignorant of the true God, the sole and almighty Lord of Heaven and Earth, he would naturally regard Moses as only one of the tribes of magicians acting by the power of some limited and national deity - and if he could find in his own servants, powers of a similar kind, on however small scale they might be exerted, it was not difficult especially in the beginning, and amidst so many

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* We see by the history in the second chapter of Exodus and the 5th verse that it was the custom even of the Princesses of Egypt to go down to the river to purify themselves in waters which were deemed to be sacred —

motives that resisted his conviction of the truth, to persuade himself that Moses was only an extraordinary magician. # —

But as this illustrious servant of God progressed chastizing the insolence, the impiety, the injustice of Pharoah, the immediate hand of God in his operations, become more visible and undeniable — The magicians themselves smitten with the judgment of Heaven acknowledge it X — The king under the pressure of his calamities was often constrained to confess it, and to intreat Moses to become an intercessor for him with God —

But when each judgment was removed, it was soon forgotten — and the King of Egypt presents to us an example of what is frequently seen in the course of divine Providence — of a sinner humbled & relenting under deep affliction, but returning again to his oblivion of God & his habitual vices, with his returning prosperity

From this brief view of the competition of the magicians of Egypt, with the great Prophet & Legislator of Israel it will appear

NOTES

This tradition concerning Moses, appears to have been handed down to posterity in the history of Egypt. Eusebius quotes Numenius a Pythagorean philosopher as saying that Jannes and Dambes excelled in the science of magic, and were therefore chosen by common consent to be opposed to Moseus

And Pliny in his natural history ranks Moses among the most famous of the magicians — L. 30 ch 2

X Exodus 9. 10. 07 — 19

that there was nothing truly miraculous in their operations, nothing superior to what is performed in every age and in every country, by the professors of certain secret arts - nothing which can impair, the credit of real miracles, wrought in confirmation of divine revelation -

It may be asked why God chose as the beginning of his miracles, an action so conformable in its appearance to an exploit so frequently performed according to the testimony of ancient history by the magicians of Egypt, as that of converting the rod into a serpent? Perhaps it was to shew the futility of their art, and the folly of those who confided it - The ancient Pagans believed that magic was a divine art, and that those who practiced it were inspired by some Deity or some Demon, and endued by him with power to change the course of nature —

Hence in order to shew that their art was nothing but an imposition on the spectators & that their Deities and their Demons were entirely without power, first tempted them to perform the most boasted of their prodigies & then clearly demonstrated it was not an effect, of ~~divine~~ power, by making his serpent swallow up those, which they had substituted for their wands ✻ —

✻ Although the heathens believed in a multiplicity of Gods, they believed that the works of each were wholly independent of all the rest - and therefore though a more powerful God, could ultimately thwart, the designs of a weaker one

I shall procud in the next lecture, to consider some other facts, which seem to militate against the sole and exclusive power of God in working miracles —

Note continued

Yet he could not undo, what that weaker one had already done — When the serpents of the magicians therefore, were devoured, it was a proof on their own principles that they were not the productions of any Deity — End of the Note —

End of the 9th Lecture —

Lecture 10th

Another example which is often quoted of the miraculous powers of magic & of the interference of infernal spirits in human concerns, is supposed to be found in the history of the witch who lived at Endor in Israel, and pretended like others of the same craft, to the power of calling up the dead, to give out oracles to the credulous & superstitious people who consulted them.

The history is contained in the twenty eighth chapter of the first book of Samuel. This illustrious Prophet by whose council the affairs of Israel had been long directed was now dead. Saul a rash & impetuous prince, no longer restrained by the authority of this holy man, had plunged out into many extravagancies & impieties by which he forfeited the protection & favour of God. Reduced to the greatest extremities in a dangerous war, with the neighbouring nations of Palestine, God had refused to answer him in the usual ways, by which he often communicated his will to the rulers of that chosen people. Overwhelmed by the number of his enemies, and the forebodings of his approaching fate, in the perturbation & affliction of his mind, had recourse to the criminal expedient of applying to

an impious professor of the art of necromancy in order to divine into the future destiny particularly into the issue of a dreadful battle in which he was about to engage -

The laws of Moses had rigorously condemned all pretenders to this diabolical superstition, not only on account of the injury such pretences always do, to the ignorant part of Society, but especially because they pretended to divert the reverence & the worship of the people of Israel from the living & true God to the unreal but fearful objects of a gloomy imagination # - Saul himself had lately caused a search to be made for them throughout the nation & had put to death all those whom he could discover - Yet his present distress awakening every latent spark of superstition in his soul, he was so far forgetful of his duty as king of Israel as to apply to one of those miserable deceivers, who it seems had survived the carnage & escaped the rigour of justice —

The history proceeds to say that Saul having come in disguise to this professional witch or necromancer desired her to call

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= Note =

It is always to be remembered that God himself deigned to be the actual sovereign of that people, and therefore that every species of Idolatry was diverting their allegiance, their fear, and their duty from him to those horrible phantoms which usurped his place - In this view it was treason against the lawful head of their government & deserved the highest penalties inflicted by the law —

up to him, the Prophet Samuel, who was lately dead. The woman upon seeing the image of Samuel before [redacted] cried out in terror & immediately turning to Saul, recognised the King under his disguise. He did not at first perceive the Prophet, but knew him by the description, which the sorceress gave of his person & habit. It would seem from the literal construction of the words, that the king afterwards perceived him with his own eyes, and that the woman then retiring left them to converse together for a short space alone. For it is added in the 21st verse, that after Saul had fainted, on hearing the awful denunciations of the Prophet the woman came unto him, and administered as much comfort to him as was in her power. In the dialogue which is said to have taken place between the King and the Prophet Samuel, reproaches him for having disquieted him in calling him up. Saul apologises for himself on account of the extreme anguish of his mind & the desertion of God, who answered him no more either by Prophets or by Dreams, which were the usual ways in which he gave his oracles or divine responses to the supreme magistrate of Israel. The indignant Prophet then demands how he dared to consult him who was only the minister of God, when God himself had refused to answer? And proceeds to denounce against him the judgment of Heaven. The time has now arrived says he, when my former predictions shall be fulfilled. The Kingdom of Israel shall be rent from thine hands for thy disobedience & crimes, and tomorrow thou and thy sons shall be with me

This history on the first view of it, and without considering the common stile of speaking of the feats of pretenders to supernatural powers in which they are said to do only what they seemed to do would suggest to an incautious reader that the Sorceress of Endor really possessed a power over the dead, and by her incantations, actually brought up the

spirit of Samuel or that gazeous envelope in which the spirits of the dead were anciently supposed to be involved. to give oracles to the king of Israel* This is the history. —And since reason and the scriptures as we have seen, both oppose the idea of any supernatural powers exerted in the art of magic or of diabolical influence over the physical and established order of nature, it is neither rational or pious to ascribe to witchcraft or sorcery, the power of raising the dead, of disturbing the bodies and spirits even of the most holy men, who have already gone to rest in Christ and of defeating the purposes of God, by drawing from them notices and revelations of the future - which he has refused to give by the means of his own appointment. This singular fact in the sacred history, then we must necessarily interpret consistent with the principles wh have been before laid down, (that is) in a way consistent with the scriptures themselves - This may be done in one of two suppositions; either that the whole scene was an effect of imposture & art, or that God in order to punish the impiety of the king of Israel miraculously sent the Prophet, or the appearance of the Prophet, to announce to him the judgments, which were impending over him, his family & his country — Both these suppositions I shall briefly illustrate, leaving it to you to chose that, which may seem most consistent with the sacred text and with reason —

Note

* It was the opinion of many of the ancients, that a very fine ethereal substance, like the vapours or gasses obtained by chemical process from different kinds of matter, was separated from the body at death; that this substance attached itself to the soul, that it still bore the resemblance of the body from which it was separated, and was capable of being so condensed as to become visible —

By the first the whole scene must have been the effect, merely, of imposture, and the art of the sorceress. - And this is neither an impossible, or improbable supposition. It was not an uncommon thing among the Pagans, from whom the People of Israel borrowed so many superstitions to find those wretches, who by dreadful incantations addressed to infernal deities, and by horrible rites pretended to disturb the order of nature, and to call up the ghosts of the dead from their tombs ✻. Of these rites and incantations Horace in his Canidia gives us an account in which the sorceress boasts that she is able to call up again even the dead who have already been consumed on their funeral piles ✳ - - Numerous writers among the Greeks and Romans attest their existence - The Poet Tibullus thus describes the pretensions of the whole tribe. Hoc, cantu finditque solum, manesque sepulchris, Elicit, et tepido devocat ossa rogo. Liber 1. El. 2

Though despised by the wised part of Society even among the Pagans yet the lower classes of the People being by their ignorance & their fears strangely addicted to the most gloomy & horrible superstition for a long time supported their credit - and when these sorcerers added to their dreadful arts the powers of ventriloquy, which was often the case they held a powerful dominion over the people's imagination - That the Sorceress of Endor possessed this power the original term translated the familiar spirit gives us reason to suspect - Ob which is the Hebrew word is generally rendered in the greek translation of the seventy a ventriloquist - The meaning of ob is bottle shaped, probably because in the act of ventiloquy the stomach was extended with

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✻ From these pretenses has been derived the word necromancy to designate their imaginary art —

✳ Epodes; the last ode —

wind which the people supposed, to be the effect of a divine afflatus accompanying the spirit of prophecy - It no doubt was the general idea & the idea of Saul in particular that such persons were possessed by a familiar spirit, genius or deity which attended them & gave forth its oracles and responses from within - —And therefore when the King desired his servants to seek out a person, who had the spirit of Ob, his meaning was conformable to our version, which may justify the translators: But the term itself indicates the nature of her art and the means by which she imposed on the credulous multitude who consulted her ——

This being admitted, and it being admitted farther that she might have possessed any apparatus, for producing a luminous a aerial appearance before the eyes of the King in a darkened chamber* the whole phenomenon is capable of an easy solution, and even without any visible image it is not inexplicable - The disorder of the kings mind, the distress occasioned by the ruinous state of his affairs, and the terror naturally excited by the apprehension of seeing a dead prophet who had been unworthily treated by him, during his life, and who now was probably the messenger of the just and terrible displeasure of God whom he had offended, would render him credulous, superstitious, and easy to be deceived. The sorceress described the person and habit of Samuel with which she was well acquainted - This alone was sufficient to deceive the terrified King, who hardly dared to look up. But when she imitated his voice, and entered into a dialogue with Saul in the name and in the manner of the Prophet this might have completed his deception ——

Note

* Such images are known frequently to be exhibited by strolling mountebanks, by means of light thrown on coloured pictures, through lenses properly disposed behind a small aperture in a dark screen —

It is said, And Saul knew that it was Samuel - But he might have known him only from the description of him given by the sorceress - The greatest difficulty which occurs in this interpretation, is on the prediction which must have been uttered by the woman herself which was so speedily verified - The Lord hath rent thy kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even unto David. Moreover the Lord will also deliver thee with Israel, into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me - This difficulty however is not insuperable. It is well known that the possessors of these secret arts, were generally persons of great ingenuity and acuteness of mind & like those who directed the Pagan oracles had established the means of the most extensive and accurate information, concerning all persons who might come to consult them, concerning all subjects with regard to which it was to be expected, that responses should be required of them. From he knowledge, then, of the state of the country, the progress of the war, and the relative circumstances of the two armies which were about to engage in battle, it might not be difficult for her to conjecture the issue of a conflict, which was likely to be so unequal and which could not be delayed - These circumstances were so obvious, & at the same time so unfavourable to the army of Israel, that the king himself began to despair of his own affairs - It is not wonderful then that persons so well informed as these necromancers sorcerers took care to be, should be able to predict the result - She might have had means of knowing the king, of whom at first she pretended to be ignorant, till she had obtained his oath for her security - Her surprise at seeing the image of Samuel, might have been only an affectation of her art, and her prediction a fortunate conjecture -

Such is the interpretation which may be given of this curious history, considered merely as the history of imposture attempted by a cunning sorceress - But there is another, and a very interesting light in which the appearance of Samuel to Saul may be considered and which has also the authority of great names in its favour — It has been supposed to be a miraculous

interpretation. of God himself. who at this time, & in this manner chose to send his Prophet. or the likeness of his Prophet, to denounce his fearful judgements on a guilty prince, who had abused the power with which he was invested for the good of a nation, which was the peculiar care of Heaven. And there are many circumstances, which concur to give support to this opinion - That was an age, in which according to the sacred scriptures, God frequently appeared in an extraordinary manner in visions, or by his prophets, to announce his will to the heads of his chosen people - He had lately, indeed, refused to meet with Saul, in the methods in which he had usually made known to him, his councils & commands: but might not he have chosen, the moment of the kings crime, who was seeking in an unlawful way, to know the secret destinations of divine providence, to denounce his condemnation & so to make his guilty curiosity his punishment? It does not seem from the history, as if the appearance of Samuel, was the consequence of an operation of the womans art - She cried out immediately & apparantly before she had time to commence her operations at a vision which she seems not to have expected - But no sooner had she perceived it than turning to Saul, she upbraided him for having deceived her, and under his disguise recognised her King, not from any information she received from the Prophet, but inferring it from the appearance of a divine messenger, who she was conscious had presented himself in a manner, altogether independent on her incantations & the powers of her art. Every Israelite knew that God designed to give extraordinary oracles, only to the rulers of his chosen People - And her suddenly recognising Saul, in the manner she did, carries with it a strong implication that the appearance of Samuel was real, that it was not the effect of her art - that it was wholly unexpected by her, and was in reality a miraculous interposition, equally surprising to the sorceress and the king —

If the Prophet demands why he had disturbed him in the grave? It is upon the supposition we are now making, a most keen & poignant sarcasm, intended to convey the severest reprehension of his folly, in thinking to obtain by sorcery & magical incantations an answer which could be given only by God. & which God had now unexpectedly met him to give in terrible vengeance —

as presignations of future events ✠ —

The simple meaning of the passage therefore, is. if any prognosticator dreamer &c. giveth thee, or pointeth out to thee, any extraordinary appearances in nature, as a certain premonition of any future event & a proof of the divinity of the Idols adored in their Temples & if the event should come to pass which may often be the case without any divine prescience, or any departure from the ordinary laws of nature, let not this seduce thee from the worship of the living & true God. who brought thee, by the most illustrious display of divine power, out of the land of Egypt; nor let it tempt thee to mingle in the polluted rites of the licentious Gods around thee — The Lord your God proveth you, by permitting the operations of nature, to proceed in their regular course, although, by this permission, they may seem to confirm the imposture — A. weak & gross mind prone to substitute a pompous ceremonial in the room of the pure worship of the Deity, a corrupted heart, prone to indulge in the licentious rites of a Pagan Temple, will easily suffer itself to be seduced by such pretended effects of divination. But a mind enlightened by divine truth, a breast enflamed by a sincere & supreme regard to the glory of God & to that infinite goodness which chose your nation in Abraham, which delivered it from the bondage of Egypt, and established it in the land of Canaan, will be a proof against all deceptions & impostures, which may have for their end to mislead you to Idolatry; or bring into any comparison, the false & impure Gods of the Heathen, the work of human art, with the true, the holy & self existent Jehovah ——

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In the same sense Ælian, uses these words, saying "When Alexander led his forces against Thebes the Gods sent to them signs & wonders (semia. kai. terata) presignifying their approaching misfortunes". Var. Hist. Lib. 2. Ch 27 - Cicero, in his book, de divinatione, informs us what was the nature of these soothsayings & astrological predictions in the East — Chaldæi — diuturna observatione siderum, scientiam putantur efficisse, ut prædici posset, quid. cuique eventurum, & quis quisque fato natus esset. (Libr. 1st ch. 1st) —— And with indignant wit he tells us that any rare & uncommon accident was esteemed portentous by the Pagans, as well as those extraordinary events on the Earth, the atmosphere, among the heavenly bodies, which in that age, were thought to be preternatural ——

This passage therefor affords no countenance to miracles said to be performed by false prophets, by heathen Gods, or the astrologers, & divines attached to their temples ✠

The second passage to which I referred is in Matthew Chap. 24th ⁂ Our blessed Saviour speaking of the symptoms, which should precede the final destruction of Jerusalem, says, "There shall arise false Christs, & false Prophets, & shall shew great signs & wonders, insomuch, that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect" — The original translated shew is δοῦναι and is nearly equivalent to the expression in Deuty; which promises, however they were unable to accomplish — And this interpretation corresponds perfectly with the history of that period written by Josephus —

One Theudas, about the forty sixth year of the Christian era, pretending to be a prophet, drew after him a great multitude, promising to divide the river Jordan before them, like Joshua — But he, & a great part of those who followed him, soon perished — A few years later according to the same historian, Judea was full of impostors, who led the people out into the wilderness, undertaking to exhibit divine wonders — But they and their followers were dispersed, and suffered from the Romans the punishment of their folly — The nearer the Jews approached to their destruction, the more were these false prophets & false Messiahs multiplied: and the more credulous were the deluded people, because they promised them deliverance from their enemies & triumphs over the Romans — Even during the conflagration of the temple, and in the last moments of that fatal siege which desolated Jerusalem forever, a false prophet encouraged them with the hopes of some miraculous signs of their approaching salvation from the Roman power —

Many extraordinary natural phenomena appeared at that time in the atmosphere, of which the impostors well knew how to avail themselves, to deceive the credulity of the multitude — So that by promising miraculous signs and by appealing to certain natural phenomena, the causes of which were not understood in that age & which they proclaimed to be miraculous and divine, they amused & buoyed up the false hopes of the people, so

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✠ It is further said, that prophets shall be put to death, because Jehovah, being the immediate & supreme ruler of the nation of Israel, every attempt to draw the people to idolatry, was treason against that theocratic constitution constitution of government —

⁂ Verse 24th of Mark 13th 22d —

desperate was the phrenzy which had seized on all ranks of the state and so literally was the prediction of our Saviour fulfilled —

Such shall be the infatuation, it was said, that they shall de= ceive if possible the very elect; that is the Christians* then residing in Jerusalem, so as to tempt them by their boastful promises & their false prodigies, to remain in the city and thus be involved in the catastrophe of the unhappy Jews, contrary to the solemn admonition & warning of their divine master — For Christ had premonished his disciples of the signs which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem, and had exhorted them when these should appear immediately to leave the falling city — X

Thus from every examination which we have made we may fairly and decisively conclude, that the scriptures give no countenance to the idea of miracles, performed by false Prophets, by magicians, by Demons operating in them, or by any other being except God alone, and real miracles are always clear & infallible proofs that God has spoken; they ought always to command our faith & obedience # —

But the enemies of our holy religion pretend to produce examples of miracles wrought, or said to be wrought, by men bearing no commission, bringing no revelation from heaven, & equally well authenticated with those of our blessed Saviour & his Apostles — The most celebrated of these prodigy managers is Apollonius of Tyanna a city of Cappadocia, a province in the lesser Asia. He was born near the beginning of the first century of the christian era. Very early in his life (16) he attached himself very

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* — Such is the influence of prejudice & preconceived habits of thinking, that this easy & natural interpretation is overlooked & rejected by a great part of readers, and even of commentators on the scriptures, thro a desire of extending the sphere of diabolical agency & to ascribe miraculous powers to the Prince of evil spirits & his instruments especially in that gloomy & distressful period preceding the second coming of Christ. But I must repeat and insist that, if any false prophet or demon has the power of working real miracles before our eyes, no blame can be attached to them, with at least as great confidence as to those which have been wrought so many ages before in the presence of others —

X — It is recorded in history that the christians at that time, residing in Jerusalem, warned by the predictions & obedient to the command of God actually forsook it & retiring to Pella a small town near lived securely and under the protection of the Romans, while the capital of their nation was laid desolate & almost the whole race of unbelieving Jews exterminated —

— It is hardly necessary after what has been said to quote an objection to this — the expression of St Paul concerning the man of sin, "whose coming" saith he" is after the working of satan, with all power & signs & lying wonders" — The syntax of the original requires the epithet lying to be prefixed to the term power & signs as well as wonders, so that all the pretended miracles of the man of sin, who is believed to be the church of Rome are at once branded with the character of falsehood & imposture —

Jealously to the Pythagorean school & submitted to the most rigorous discipline of that abstemious sect. He suffered his hair to grow without any care, he wore nothing but a linen frock, he abstained from wine & flesh, & is reported to have observed an inviolable silence for six years, during which time he quelled certain popular insurrections without speaking a word. He travelled over the greatest part of the then known world, his mortified appearance attracted the admiration of the multitude - he is said to have performed many prodigies, and pretended to understand the oracles which were uttered by birds - He was venerated in many parts of Asia as a very wise man and in many places altars were erected to him - One even of the Roman Emperors, (Alexander Severus) offered a species of worship to him along with Abraham & Christ & other domestic deities - Some works he left behind him which are now lost - one of wh was on judicial astrology & another on different objects proper to be offered to different deities - In some of his letters, he speaks of the answers he had received from different oracles, particularly that of Trophonius - These circumstances alone will sink his reputation as a Philosopher & as a Man - Yet being the only characters which the Pagans had to oppose to the founders of Christianity, they have studiously exaggerated his wisdom & his prodigies - Eusebius informs us, that Hierocles a violent enemy of christianity set himself to contrast Apollonius with Christ, whose book on this subject Eusebius has refuted - The prodigies ascribed to Apollonius, besides their extravagance, possess little authenticity as subjects of history - Most of them were performed in distant Countries & are transmitted to us by no adequate testimonies - No disciples accompanied him - No martyrs died to attest them - No divine law was given to mankind on their authority - No great moral change was made in the face of the world on account of his appearance in it - & the honours paid to him after his death, were vague & without an object -

They were like the cenotaph of the Romans the empty memorials of a celebrated name - The histories of him which have come down to us are of a very dubious authority. Some fragments of his life by Hieracles are preserved only in the computation of Eusebius. But the most complete and at the same time the most suspected history, was written by Philostratus from documents preserved by Damis a native of Ninevah, who was one of the disciples of the Philosopher. The magic chronicles of Damis, were compiled chiefly from memoirs, written by Apollonius himself of his own life - These falling into the hands of the Empress Julia wife of Severus, she thought they were not worthy of the great fame of the Philosopher & therefore delivered them to Philostratus the sophist, desiring him to prepare from them, a history more fitted to exalt the glory of this boast of Paganism - Her husband worshipped him along with Abraham, Orpheus & Christ, on account of his traditionary reputation. It would seem as if she wished to provide for him a surer foundation for his power and a better title to be placed among the Lares of the palace

Combining all these circumstances it will be evident that that which is called the history Philostratus is rather a novel, a mere rhetorical effort to embellish the remains of a wandering philosopher, distinguished chiefly by his austere singularities. This pretended history was composed from the materials collected by Damis a weak & credulous man, who gathered them from some memoirs of Apollonius concerning himself, & from certain traditionary reports which were current, of the wonders he performed in various & remote countries - —— It was written more than a century after the death of Apollonius, and at a great distance from the scenes of his exploits. It is worthy therefore of but little credit; and Mr Boyle himself in his short account (which after a longer one of Mr D. Tillemont) he wrote of Apollonius says. " It is not to be doubted but that the history of Philostratus contains a thousand fabulous things. Can the fiction of Philostratus then, or the vague rumours collected by Damis, be put in competi-

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with the evangelical history: or detract in the mind of any reasonable man from the authenticaty & glory of the divine miracles performed by our blessed Saviour and his apostles to demonstrate their mission from heaven —

If so little credit is due to the miraculous stories of this chief of wonder workers of Paganism it is unnecessary to enter into a minute examination of others. Their oracles have been sufficiently exposed — Their pretences to asthology, divination, to nicromancy & magic are discredited by every wise man. So unnecessary is it after Mr Paley to point out the futility of those examples which Mr Hume in the play of his wit has pretended to bring into competition with the miracles of Christianity — The cure of the blind man at Alexandria, by the Emperor Vespasian; the restoration of a limb of one of the attendants at a church in saragossa so oneringly related by the Cardinal De Retz, & the cures performed for a time at the tomb of the Abbé Paris —

The conclusion which I draw from all these details in the three last lectures, is the same with the principle with which I commenced — That real miracles are the work of God only — That they are a proper & adequate proof of a mission from him — And that the Prophet performing them, who speaks in his name, delivers to the world only his holy will —

— End of the Eleventh Lecture —

Lecture 12th

Having thus far treated of miracles, and of the evidence derived from them, in support of divine revelation, & having obviated some of the principal objections from those spurious pretences to supernatural powers, by which impostors have attempted to beguile the admiration, and the confidence of mankind, I proceed to take a brief view of the next evidence which is prophecy. The curiosity of mankind and their solicitude to dive into the secrets of futurity, have given rise to oracular predictions among all the nations of antiquity. But all these responses usually related to some immediate emergency of the state, or the individual consulting the oracle, concerning which some probable conjecture might be formed. We do not find among them, as in the sacred scriptures any connected series of prophecy extending to the most distant and future period of time. The Priest who presided over the oracles possessed ample means of acquiring accurate & extensive information, concerning the situation & circumstances of all persons applying to them, and were thus enabled frequently to make very fortunate predictions. But in cases which were necessarily obscure & dubious, their dexterity in the ambiguous choice, or arrangement of words, helped them often to adapt their responses, to the most contrary events.

The prophecies of the sacred writings, affect no such duplicity or ambiguity of aim. They are not confined to the destinies of individuals, or to the revolutions in the state of princes and of nations, the causes of which are already visibly prepared; but look forward through the whole series of time, to events which no human foresight & sagacity could reach - Events near at hand the inspired prophets often foretold for the conviction of the present generation & with the same certainty & ease pointed out those which were to spring from them in future ages for the conviction of the most distant posterity - Clear and undeniable predictions of future events, the existence of which could not be foreseen by the relation of cause & effect, are decisive demonstrations of the divine mission of a prophet & of the illumination of his mind by the holy spirit. For who but God who hath created all things & arranged the whole system of divine providence can see the end from the beginning? In the evidence by which the credibility of the gospel is supported, God has given a new display of his wisdom & goodness. Miracles were the best & the only effectual proofs to those who first received the gospel, of its being a revelation from God, because they carried with them instantaneous conviction; whereas the accomplishment of prophecy must have been much too slow in its effects. But when once divine truth had taken pos-

ession of the human mind, it would be nourished & strengthened there, by the gradual development of prophecy, furnishing as it does a successive & growing evidence to all ages. Miracles from their nature cannot be continued, but prophecy unfolding itself in successive periods of time, must have upon the serious & reflecting mind the operation of a constant miracle. Many of the predictions of the holy scriptures respect the people of Israel as a seperate community, their internal state & their various revolutions, before their final extermination from the land of promise. But these having since passed away, the evidence resulting from such prophecies necessarily loses to after ages part of its force. Besides the difficulty arising from the nature of history, of fixing at all times precisely the dates of predictions & events long past, having given occasion to the enemies of religion, to pronounce with their usual effrontery, that the ancient prophecies were written posterior to the events which they so clearly foretell, I purpose in these illustrations, to direct your attention to such of them only, as can by perversion of language or chronology, be liable to this charge.

It would require volumes to unfold all the prophecies even of this character & to go thro all the critical disquisitions & historical details, which would be necessary in order to present

them to you in their full evidence. I shall confine myself therefore to a very few, the accomplishment of which passing before our eyes, or which relate to the coming of our Saviour himself, so long foreseen & foretold, by those holy men, who guided & illuminated by the spirit of truth, were esteemed worthy by God, to be the organs of his mercy to the ancient world.

The first which I shall select, is the prophecy concerning the character & destinies of Ishmael, the son of Abram, and that great and powerful nation which was to spring from them.

He is universally acknowledged to be the progenitor of all the Arab tribes, who to this day hold Ishmael & Abram in the highest veneration. His Mother Hagar had been exiled from the family of the Patriarch through the jealousy & pride of her mistress. And while she wandered disconsolately through the wilderness, the Angel of the Lord appeared to console her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly saith he. Behold thou shalt bear a son, & shalt call his name Ishmael ✠ because the Lord hath heard thy affliction: And he will be a wild man, and his hand shall be against every mans, & every mans hand shall be against him & he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren ✣ — The angel who speaks in the name

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✠ That is God shall hear — ✣ Genesis 16. 10 & 12 verses

of Jehovah and who was Jehovah himself immediately adds- Behold I have blessed him & will make him fruitful & will multiply his seed exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation X- The mode of expression here demonstrates that the whole prediction relates rather to the posterity of Ishmael, than to Ishmael himself- The Arabians who acknowledge this Patriarch for their progenitor, and glory in being derived from Abraham, ~~also acknowledge this patriarch for their progenitor~~, early became a numerous people, according to the testimony of the ancient writers; and have certainly been a great nation ever since there existed any authentic records of profane history-

At present they not only fill the vast peninsula of Arabia, but are dispersed in innumerable herds & wandering tribes from India to the Atlantic ocean & from Abyssinia to the Mediterranean. But the circumstances most striking in this prediction are, the permanent character of the nation, & their distinct and independent existence in the midst of the constant revolutions of the nations which surrounded them & of the frequent attempts which have been made, to subdue them, by the greatest conquerors of the world- The former has been made in these words-

X Genesis 16. verse 20

He shall be a wild man, and his hand shall be against every mans, & every mans hand against him. The second is contained in the following. & he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

Let us now breifly view each.

1st He shall be a wild man.

The original is more expressive, he shall be like a wild ass. That is in his temper, his manners & habits of living, resembling that fierce, vagrant & untamed animal, which is thus finely described in the 29 Chap. 5 & 6 verses of the book of Job. Who hath sent out the wild ass free? & who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? Whose house I have made the wilderness and the barren lands his dwelling. He scorneth the multitude of the City, neither regardeth he the cry of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture & he searcheth after every green thing. — Nothing could be more descriptive of the way of living of the greater part of the Arabians, who reside cheifly in sandy deserts & in moveable tents, wandering about in heaps, in quest of a scanty subsistence. They are united in clans or hordes, but they are rather associations of free-booters, than communities, under any regular form of government. And in this wild, licentious, vagrant state, they are ready to pillage the travellers or caravans or to attract the troops of all nations indiscriminately. Thus mutually attacked & attacking, robbers by land & pirates by sea, it is literally true, that their hands are against all other men, and

all other mens hands against them - They ocuple not to attack the greatest armies, & they have frequently successively been engaged in wars against all the mightiest empires of the East. The Egyptian, Assyrian, the Persian, the Macedonian, and finally the Roman. Yet they dwell in the presence of all their brethren. Their habitations, have not been overturned or destroyed, as all the other nations of the earth have been. They have maintained their independence & freedom, against all the efforts which have been made to subdue them, & have preserved a seperate and distinct existence, unblended with any other people. They dwell by themselves in the face of all their brethren, notwithstanding the perpetual hostilities in which they have been engaged with almost the whole world

Sesostris though he carried his arms to Scythia & to India, was obliged to draw a line from Heliopolus to Pelusium, to defend Egypt from the incursions of the Arabs ✢ —

And Herodotus assures us that the Persians were never able to conquer the Arabians; on the other hand they were obliged to court that hardy race; as without their freindship & aid the armies of Persia could never have obtained a passage into Egypt. Alexander the Great provoked by a slight ✱ offered him by this people, was attempting their conquest

✢ Diodorus Siculus, liber 1st page 36. Edit Stephan.

✱ Alexander after the conquest of Persia & of all Asia, received embassies of congratulation from all the states & princes in his vicinity. But the proud & independent Arabians, refused to send any ambassador this affront it was wh provoked the conqueror of Darius & he had resolved to chastise it —

when he was overtaken by death. Antigonus the most powerful of his succesors, made war upon them, but was shamefully foiled under two of his greatest ginirals, viz. Athenens and his son Demetrius. Which gave reason to Diodorus Siculus to say, that "neither the Assyrians formerly, nor the kings of the Medes & Persians, nor even the Macedonians were able to subdue them & tho' they led against them numerous & mighty armies they were not able to accomplish their designs of conquest"

The Romans at last when they became masters of the world, invaded them under a succession of their most illustrious captains — Lucullus, Pompey. Alius, Gallus. Trajan. Severus — & and although they reduced to a temporary submission, a few of the nothern tribes, yet they were not able, to make any permanent impression, on the heart of the country & these few intimidated hordes, returned to their licentious independence, as as the Roman armies retired. At length they came victors in their turn and under the name of Saracens overran all the East. The north of Africa, & even part of Europe, & established one of the most powerful Empires that ever existed. The Turks who succeeded them in the East, were never able to impose their yoke on Arabia. Still they exist independent, still they exist pure & unmixed with any other people. The ancient Assyrians, The ancient Persians.

the ancient Egyptians & even the ancient Romans, can no longer be discriminated, from the nations whom they conquered, or who conquered them: but the Arabs have never been confounded with any other people. They dwell by themselves in the presence of all their brethren. All other nations in the progress of society, have generally changed their customs, habits, manners & character. The Arabs have ever remained the same, and the character of the father has distinguished his posterity through a series of 4000 years. Who could have foreseen national fortunes & national character so singular & peculiar & continued down through such a long succession of ages, but the spirit of God alone? He was tracing out to Abraham, his chosen servant the future fortunes of his family, by both his sons Isaac & Ishmael.

The many circumstances in which they resemble one another, & different from all the world & in none more than their adherence to the customs of their ancestors & preserving themselves unmixed with other nations even while they were intermingled among them. Thus they preserve in high veneration the memory of this illustrious & pious Patriarch. But circumstances, but characteristics, but fortunes so singularly, so totally unlike those of all the world, so little to be expected in human nature - as they could be foreknown only by the infinite prescience of God, so they could have

existed and been preserved only by a peculiar & immediate direction of his alluding Providence. And they furnish a testimony of no inconsiderable authority to the inspiration of the holy records —

I shall proceed in the next lecture to consider a prediction equally extraordinary, concerning the fortunes of other branches of Abrahams family —

End of Lecture 12

Lecture 13th

I have shewn the exact & wonderful account of the prediction of God to Abraham, concerning the posterity of one of his sons; and now, passing over many prophecies equally wonderful, with regard to the people of Israel, the descendants of Isaac his other son, I will direct your attention, only to that uttered by Moses, their great Legislator, near the close of his life - At that interesting period when the devout & pious mind, usually becomes most divine & prophetic, after multiplying the most gracious promises of blessings, which should crown their obedience to the laws under which God had placed them; launching forward into future time, and foreseeing the general defection of the nation from virtue & from true religion, he denounces the fearful judgments of heaven which should follow their disobedience & impiety. And then following them through their fortunes to the end of time, he seems as far they have progressed hitherto, to present us a history rather than a prophecy - These judgments are so dreadful that nothing but duty and the command of God, could have extorted them from the father and legislator of his people; their fortunes are so peculiar, that nothing but that infinite prescience which embraces all things, from beginning to end under one view, could have given so many ages before they existed -

The prophecies to which I refer are contained in the 28th & 30th Chap. of Deuteronomy, I shall here transcribe such a portion of them only, as is necessary to the object of the present lecture, which is to point out the final destruction of the Government & national existence of that people, their dispersion, & present state — "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the Earth; as swift as the eagle that flieth; a Nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, who shall not regard the presence of the old, or shew favour to the young. And he shall eat the fruit of thy earth. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high & fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustest throughout all thy land — And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons & of thy daughters in the seige & in the straitness wherein thine enemies shall distress thee, so that the man who is very delicate & tender among you, his eye shall be evil towards his brother & towards the wife of his bosom, & towards the remnant of his children, which he shall leave, so that he shall he not give to any of them the flesh of his children which he shall eat, because he shall have nothing left him in the seige, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates — The tender & delicate woman among you, who would not dare to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for her tenderness & delicateness, her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom & her Son & her daughter & her young infant, even towards the children who she shall bear, for she shall eat for want of things secretly in the seige & the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates — And it shall come to pass (Chap 30. 1-3) whenall those things shall come upon thee (verse 68) that ye shall be cut from the land whither thou goest to possess it, And the Lord shall scat thee among all people from one end of the earth even unto the other. And among these nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest. And it shall come to pass (Chap. 30. 1-3) when all these things shall come upon thee Ece, and thou shalt call them to mind among all nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and thou shalt return unto the Lord God Ece. that the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity & will have compassion upon thee, and will return & gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee

Such is the prediction & those who are even moderately acquainted with the Jewish history, cannot but perceive with what accuracy it has been fulfilled in every part— the judgments of heaven were denounced upon them, whenever they should fall into idolatry; or degenerate into impiety— And these happened especially at two great periods, the Captivity of Babylon & the destruction of Jerusalem & the temple & the dispersion of the nation under the Emperor Vespasian & Titus his son. In one case they departed from the law of Moses; in the other case they had lost its spirit & impiously & malignantly had rejected the Lord of life. In both they suffered the most cruel miseries that have ever been inflicted on any people. Other nations when they have lost their public virtue & sunk into effeminate & profligate manners, have been subdued by their powerful neighbours and rendered tributary or enslaved by the conquering nation, so that in a short time they could not be distinguished from them—

But the fortunes of this people have been most singular & extraordinary they were punished, by the ordinance of heaven for their impieties, but conquered in the full vigour of their manners, they fought with desperation; & before they were subdued, endured sufferings without parallel in the annals of human misery— Yet they preserved a distinct & national existence, during the captivity in Babylon, as they had done in Egypt; & after they had been chastised into repentance & served for a time monuments to other nations, of the justice of God, and the truth of the prophecy, they were restored again to their own land— Destroyed again by the Romans, and more widely dispersed than ever, among all other nations they still after eighteen centuries, preserve their blood unmixed with that of the different people, with whom they are intermingled, waiting for the ultimate accomplishment of that prophecy, wh promises them a final restoration, to all their civil & religious privileges, after they shall have long served as examples, of the divine justice— The prediction mentions that they should be "besieged in all their gates". And it is remarkable, with regard to the people of Israel more than any other nation, that their calamities have befallen them, not in consequence of open & unfortunate conflicts in the field; but in separate sieges

in which the greater part of the nation, have been shut up within their walls, & suffered whatever famine, phrensy & their own furious passions, not less than the sword of the enemy, could inflict on the most miserable of mankind. The calamities wh they endured in their respective seiges inspires us with horror at the recital & perfectly accord with the terms of the prophecy. Omitting what is said on this subject in the sacred history, & passing over their sufferings under the dreadful power of the Babylonians, I refer you according to the brevity of your time, to a few passages only, in the history of their last & most terrible destruction by the Romans, written by their countryman Josephus, who was contemporary with the transactions he relates. In the various towns of Judea, besieged and taken by the Romans, that proud & execrated people, cutt off all the population without respecting age or sex. In the seige of Jerusalem divided into furious factions by ambitious & enthusiastic demagogues, whenever they were not conflicting with their external enemies, they turned their weapons against themselves; & innumerable multitudes of Jews perished in the City & in the Temple by mutual slaughter. And so terrible was the famine that in the rage of hunger they fed upon one another; even mothers quenching all the sentiments of nature, devoured their own children, & hid the remaining fragments, against another time, lest a husband, a son, or a daughter, should partake with them the horrible repast; — Thus according to the prophecy, the eye of a woman, even the tender & delicate woman, who could not venture to set the sole of her foot to the ground for tenderness & delicateness, shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, her son & towards her daughter ## — As one example out of many of the frantic

See one melancholy example of this last case. Josephus. Bello. Jud. Lb. 6. Ch. 3. Sect. 4 — and for other cases of their extreme misery & phrensy — Josephus passim.

rage & dispiration, with wh they were actuated to assist in their own destruc=
tion, & to agravate the horors in wh they were perishing, let me refer you to the
horrid catastrophe, wh took place in the castle of Massada after the stor=
ming of Jerusalem. A wretched remnant of the citizens sought
refuge in that fortress but being pursued by the Romans
they at the instigation of one of their leaders first mur=
dered their wives and children they then chose from
among the rest ten by lot who were to slay the rest, after-
which one of the ten was chosen to put to death the
other nine who when he had executed this dread
ful office stabbed himself. In this manner perished
960 in this single fortress. And in the whole war
there perished by the sword and by famine and by
their own hands upwards of 1.200.000 persons, besides
nearly 100.000 who were taken prisoners and sold
for slaves.* Of these captives so little care was taken, that
12.000 were literally starved to death and of the rem=
ainder a great part was sent to the works in
Egypt according to the prophecy - "And the Lord
shall bring you into Egypt in ships and there
ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men
and for bond-women and no man shall buy
you". Chap 28th Vers 68th. That is such numbers shall

* Accurately according to Josephus the dead were
1.240.496 and the prisoners 99.200.

be brought to the market that they should not be thought worth purchasing*. — So conformable was this distressful lamentation of the Jewish state and the Holy city to the prediction of our Savour as well as that of Moses. "For there shall be great tribulation such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no nor never shall be and except those days should be shortened there should be no flesh saved" (Ch. of 24. 24. 22) The prophecy proceeds "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all nations from one end of the earth even unto the other and among these nations thou shalt find no ease neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest." And has it not been verified in the state of the Jewish people from the time of Titus to the present day? is there a civilized nation under heaven in which Jews and in most of them in which a prodigious number of Jews are not to be found? And have they not been insulted perpetually pillaged denied the privileges of citizenship alternately banished and recalled and recalled only to pillaged

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* It was said they should go into Egypt in ships because probably the Romans would not think them worth the expense and trouble to send them by the tedious route of the wilderness and the isthmus thro' which they had originally come ~~pony~~ that country to the land of canaan but would rather lay them on board of ships belonging to the Roman fleet on the coast of Phoenicia, or the merchants vessels trading there to the kingdom of Egypt.

and banished again? The whole history of that
afflicted people since their dispersion confirm the
words of Moses "that they should become an asto=
nishment, a proverb and a bye word among all na
tions" (Deut 28.37)

One circumstance which principally contributed
to their dispersion and to the injuries which they
have sustained, is that they have been deprived the
privilege of landed property in almost all countries
they have been obliged to have recourse to trade &
to exchanging money for a subsistance. It has been
necessary as being generally tradesmen and brokers
that they should be widely dispersed in different
countries. Their wealth excited envy and pointed
them out as an easy prey to arbitary princes
when ever the public coffers were empty. The uncertainty
of their state limpled them to such usurous interest
in their contracts for money lending and this excit
ed the hatred and obloquy of many needy bor
rowers and the public hatred justified the violence
and rapacity of government which oppressed them &
which would not have been endured towards any
other citizen. Their character has sprung out of their
state and their persecutions in a great measure out
of their character But who would have fore-seen
circumstances so singular and foreseen them so
many ages ago? Surely none but the Spirit of God-

ain'd those prophets enlightned by him. Could it by by any other direction that one nation should be founded and as differing so widely from every other nation on the globe; that one people should be selected to be a standing miracle to all generations; that they should be mingled with all the nations of the earth and yet never be blended with them; that they should be hated, despised insulted and persecuted by all and yet not be extinguished; that they should be seperated from all existing monuments of divine jus= =tice, for having rejected and crucified the Lord of life and yet visibly preserved that God may accomplish his promise and grace to their fathers by bringing them to obedience of the truth under the dominion of that messiah so long predicted and by them so impiously rejected then a Jew see a prophecy uttered 2000 years ago fulfilled in the most particular and explany manner and continuing to be fulfilled under our eyes even to this day.*

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* It is impopible that this prediction should refer only to the Babylon and been written by some jew after his return because it is found in all the Samaritan as well as jewish copies of the scriptures and it is well that the samaritans were seperated from the people and kingdom of Judea long before the era of their captivity.

End of the 13 Lecture

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